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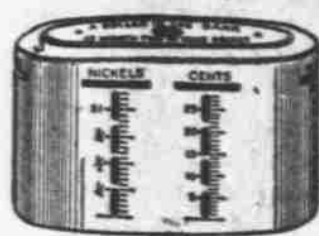
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Flexible Stone.

Itacolumite is a peculiar stone which is found in Brazil. When flexible itacolumite is cut into thin plates, and when examined with a microscope it is found to be composed almost entirely of fine grains of sand of peculiar shape, with indented edges which interlock like the fingers of clasped hands. The flexibility of the material results from this interlocking of the grains of sand, of which it is chiefly composed. Although but few persons know that this stone can be anything but hard, the flexible stone is not so much of a curiosity as it seems, for it is found in North Carolina, and there are specimens of it in a case at the Philadelphia collection. The sensation of handling a piece of stone which bends like a piece of rubber is a strange experience. If handled too roughly the stone breaks.—Indianapolis News.

A Museum's Worst Enemy.

One of the worst enemies curators of museums have to contend with is a tiny beetle, which works so neatly that there is no evidence of its woolly work until the specimen is found dismembered or otherwise ruined. Neither in America or England has any effective remedy been found. The tiny mischievous worker is the Anthrenus museumorum. The adult measures only or even less than one-eighth of an inch in length and is convex in form. The female lays eggs in specimens, and the larvae feed on them—the valued butterfly and the magnificent beetle—brought from afar. These larvae are small, plump, hairy grubs, and the sole sign of their presence, likely to be overlooked by the amateur, is a few specks of brown dust in the case.—Scientific American.

Next Door to It.

An acquaintance of the late Josh Billings was one day talking with him about the remarkable increase of imitations and substitutes for original articles, as oleomargarine for butter, celluloid for ivory, and so forth, "and," said he, "many of the substitutes go ahead of the real thing. I guess in time there will be a substitute for everything, though I don't know about wisdom."

"No," replied the humorist, "up to the present time at least there is no really good substitute for wisdom. But silence is the best that has so far been discovered."

A Disgusted Lover.

When James IV. of Scotland went to London to propose for the hand of Margaret, the daughter of Henry VII., he was somewhat disgusted to find her at their first meeting so busily engaged in a game of cards that she was scarcely able to give him any attention.

A Germ Crank.

The Author (describing his play)—And then the villain is made to bite the dust. The Lady—How very insubstantial!—Boston Transcript.

For all the disorders of the tongue the remedy must begin in the heart.

Not For Her.

"I don't see how you can tolerate that man."

"Oh, but he is a foreign nobleman, my dear!"

"I don't care," said the other girl. "I'll be fattered if I'd marry a man who does his courting with a bored air."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

A Detail.

Enthusiastic Aviator (after long explanation of principle and workings of his biplane)—Now you understand it, don't you? Young Lady—All but one thing. Aviator—and that is? Young Lady—What makes it stay up?—New York Times.

Business.

Madge—Why don't you tell him frankly that you don't like him as well as you do Charlie? Marjorie—How can I, dear? I'm not just sure that Charlie will propose.—Judge.

The Curious Pair.

Mrs. Rubba—I wonder why that woman keeps watching me? Mr. Rubba—Perhaps she's trying to find out why you are staring at her.—Philadelphia Press.

Peking Observatory.

It is believed that the observatory at Peking is the oldest in the world, having been founded in 1279 by Kublai Khan, the first emperor of the Mongol dynasty.

Covent Garden.

Covent garden, London's greatest vegetable and fruit market, was once a convent garden owned by the monks of Westminster.

At Balaklava.

The total Russian forces, infantry, cavalry and artillery, at Balaklava has been variously estimated at from 30,000 to 50,000 men, while the English force was much smaller in numbers. The two famous charges of that day were that of the heavy brigade of about 900 men against 3,000 Russians and the still more renowned charge of the light brigade of about 600 men against the Russian guns. No accurate figures seem to be recorded, as those given by various authorities differ greatly. The result of the first charge was the break of the Russian cavalry, which fled back to the protection of their artillery and were not pursued very far by the British. The second charge was unsuccessful as a military measure, for, though the Russian gunners were momentarily driven from their guns, they returned and fired upon friend and foe alike, while a superior force of cavalry engaged the British. It is said that evening parade saw only ten men mounted out of the 600 who had ridden in the charge.

Sights in Italian Cities.

Genoa and Rome are the most beautifully lighted cities in Europe because their streets are narrow enough to allow of the slinging of white electric globes across from house to house. There are no disfiguring lampposts, but at intervals down the middle of the street swing the globes of light of the tint of moonlight. Venice, on the contrary, is terribly overlighted and glitters distressingly and inappropriately. Ruskin complained that the gas in the great piazza had grown so dazzling in his day that walking or sitting there he could no longer see moon or stars. What would he have thought of the horrid exaggeration of the clusters of electric lights? Without being a Ruskin one longed to switch off nine out of every ten.—London Globe.

How Very Annoying!

Just as the young man raised his hat in response to a bow and a smile from the beautiful girl who was passing by his foot struck a banana peel and flew out from under him. He landed on the back of his neck, his hat flying in one direction and his cane in another. "Are you hurt?" asked a friendly policeman as the victim of the accident sat up and began to swear volubly. "Hurt!" he exclaimed. "No, I'm not hurt. I'm dead sore; that's what I am. That bonehead camera man across the street forgot to turn the crank, and now I've got to do that fall all over again."

Then the policeman realized that he had been privileged to see a moving picture comedy in the making.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Putting Off.

When the ship Central America sprung a leak in midocean a steamer, seeing her signal, drew near and asked, "What is amiss?" "We are in bad repair. Lie by till morning," was the answer. "Better let me take your passengers on board now." "No," said the captain; "lie by till morning." In an hour the lights of the ill fated steamer were not visible. She had gone down, and all had perished. Mr. Moody once closed a meeting in Chicago, saying, "Think this matter over till next Sunday." On their way home from church that evening a light suddenly flashed across the sky. It was the beginning of the great Chicago fire. That congregation never assembled again.—Christian Herald.

Hurrying Up.

Melancholy Aunt Clara from the country had the habit of listening to the big clock on the town hall in the village where she was visiting and exclaiming every time it struck: "Eternity draws one hour nearer." Clarence was very much impressed with that solemn reflection. One day the big clock got out of order. While repairing it the workmen made it strike every few minutes. Clarence heard it with bulging eyes. "Oh, Aunt Clara," he said excitedly, "eternity has got a move on today!"—New York Times.

His Excuse.

Justice of Peace—Your wife says you struck her. Have you any excuse to offer, uncle? The Prisoner—Ah cunningly has, judge. While I was prayin' fo' rain fo' mah yardin she starts in prayin' fo' fair wedder 'case she was gwine to wash.—Boston Journal.

Swiss Cowbells.

The cowbells used in Switzerland have a peculiar sound, rather mournful in its droning prolongation. It has been discovered that tigers fear it and run when they hear it. Therefore Swiss cowbells have been introduced into the Himalayas as a protection for cattle.

Her Little Joke.

"Henry," she exclaimed as he came home to dinner, "I heard something early this morning that opened my eyes."

"What was it?" he demanded excitedly.

"The alarm clock."

Luck.

"What's your idea of luck?" "Well, I've noticed that the fellow who works most of the time to earn his way seems to get what luck there is about."—Detroit Free Press.

He Might Shrink.

Mother—I've just washed a jacket for my little boy, and now it is too short.

New Maid—Well, wash the boy.

It is right to be contented with what we have, but not with what we are.

All Money Good in Canada.

There is no place in the world where money is under less supervision than in Canada. The coins in circulation there are not confined to the Dominion. British halfpennies and pennies circulate as freely as the cents, and United States coins of all descriptions are accepted as equal in value to the Canadian coins, though the United States refuses to handle the coins of the Dominion on its own side of the border. In the course of a busy day in Canada you are not surprised to meet coinage of many nations. Sometimes you get finds. A correspondent who is an amateur coin collector tells me he got among his change a beautiful specimen of a farthing of the reign of George III., and an hour or two afterward he became the possessor of an old Irish halfpenny over 100 years old, with the harp on one side. Probably these two coins had been carefully preserved, but poverty induced the proprietors to part with them.—London Chronicle.

Then There Was a Shakeup.

Some years ago the Italian minister of foreign affairs, Signor Prinetti, asked his majesty King Victor Emmanuel to sign a decree for the augmentation of the staff of the foreign office. The king promised to think the matter over and the next morning set out alone on foot to pay a visit to the office. Arriving at 9 o'clock, he found no one there. A long search unearthed a solitary clerk who was smoking cigarettes. "What are the hours of this office?" asked the king. "From 8 to 12," was the reply. "And when may I expect to see your colleagues?" "They generally turn up about 11." "Very well. When your chief comes tell him the king has been here." And then his majesty sent for Signor Prinetti and suggested that instead of asking for more clerks he should make it his business to see that those already on the staff attended to their duties.

The Inquisitive Japs.

The Japanese have a lively desire to know all about you. They are actively interested in your health, your business, your habits, your wealth, your personal affairs, how you like your eggs for breakfast, what your clothes cost, where you are going, when you are going and why you are going; what you intend to do after you get there, what your excuse for existing is, how often you get your hair cut, how many children you have or have not and why, what your watch cost, who is your tailor, how often you wash your teeth, how much you owe, whether you have any birthmarks and what was the occupation of your grandfather. These and all other topics that are personal to you they are anxious to discover. Their curiosity is unbounded; but, my sakes, how polite they are about it!—Samuel G. Blythe in Saturday Evening Post.

Hunting Trouble.

When a man just naturally wants trouble it is mighty easy to find an excuse for making it. According to Mike Hogan, Casey and O'Brien were having a personal argument of their own. It had progressed to the extent that each had forgotten what it was about originally, and they were wholly oblivious of the gathering crowd until an urbane and genteel person in a frock coat put in. "Come, come, my man," he said, gently plucking Casey by the sleeve. "You don't want to fight. I can tell it by your looks. Your face is too benign!" "Two be nine! Two be nine, is ut, ye scuff?" belittled Casey. "Me face is two be nine, is ut?" And there was where the real trouble began.—Louisville Times.

Longings.

A well known essayist and connoisseur of New York attended recently an artistic tea in Washington square. Near artists of all sorts—near poets, near sculptors, near painters and near novelists—attended the tea. The ladies wore djibbabs of green burlap. The gentlemen wore sandals. The collation was vegetarian. Looking calmly at that mass of freaks, he said, with a smile: "Artistic longings consist invariably, it seems, of long hair, long teeth and long faces—everything but long purses, in fact."—Washington Star.

Trenches in War.

The Romans, who were the first to make war a real art (if one forgets a certain Alexander), were in consequence the first to use trenches. Their main line of entrenchment ran across southern Germany from the east bank of the Rhine to near the present Stuttgart.

Cynical.

"But be sure you're right," exclaimed the confident philosopher, "and then go ahead."

"Be sure you're right," protested the married man, "and then get down on your knees and ask to be forgiven."—Puck.

No Truth.

"They say diet has much to do with people's character."

"Nothing of the sort. I saw that your Miss Tarr the other day filling up on angel cake."—Baltimore American.

An Outdoor Sport.

"Why do you beat the rugs with a golf club?" "It looks more like I was doing this for exercise and not under compulsion."—Kansas City Journal.

Discretion of Speech.

Discretion of speech is more than eloquence, and to speak agreeably to him with whom we deal is more than to speak in good words and good order.—Francis Bacon.

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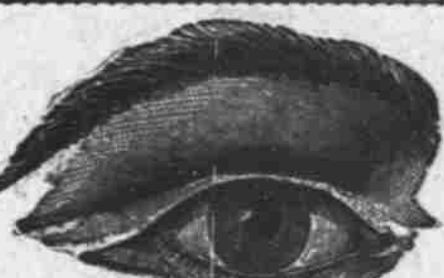
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